

CLAIMS

1. A horseshoe capable of flexion with the hoof of a horse, the horseshoe comprising side portions and a portion bridging the side portions at their ends to provide the horseshoe with a generally U shaped configuration to fit the hoof of a horse, the horseshoe comprising a molded body comprising one or more polyolefin polymers and having, as an insert, an elongated springy metal member having sufficient resilience as to enable the shoe to expand as a horse's hoof to which the shoe is attached expands as the hoof is pressed against the ground, and to contract to essentially its initial configuration as the pressure on the hoof is released.

2. The horseshoe of claim 1 wherein said body comprises ultra high molecular weight polyethylene.

3. The horseshoe of claim 2 wherein said insert includes side portions extending for a portion of the length of the respective side portions of the body but terminating rearwardly at positions spaced from rearward ends of the side portions of the body.

4. The horseshoe of claim 2 wherein said elongated insert is generally U shaped and is of substantially uniform cross section throughout its length.

5. The horseshoe of claim 2 wherein said insert is generally U-shaped and has a central portion at the front end portion of the body and side portions extending rearwardly from respective ends of the central portion.

6. The horseshoe of claim 5 wherein the bending modulus of elasticity of the central insert portion is different from the bending modulus of elasticity of either of the side insert portions.

7. The horseshoe of claim 5 wherein said insert side portions terminate rearwardly in ends terminating short of the ends of the body side portions.

8. The horseshoe of claim 7 wherein said rearward ends of said side insert portions include portions angled from the length direction of such side insert portions to grip the body of the horseshoe and restrain longitudinal movement of the insert with respect to the body.

9. The horseshoe of claim 2 wherein said body includes a supportive metal mesh insert contributing rigidity to the body and restraining the body from movement other than in its plane.

10. Method of shoeing a horse, comprising
  - a. providing a horseshoe having a molded body comprising one or more polyolefin plastics and containing a springy metal insert having a predetermined modulus of elasticity and an elastic limit,
  - b. bending the horseshoe beyond the elastic limit of the insert so that the horseshoe is configured to fit the hoof of a horse, and
  - c. attaching the horseshoe to the horse's hoof.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said molded body is formed of ultra high molecular weight polyethylene.